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THE RUINS OF NETLEY ABBEY.

A POEM.

BY

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THE

RUINS

OF

NETTLEBOBBY.

A POEM.

28 FEB 57

Advertiſement.

THE Remains of NETLEY ABBEY, *which afford a Subject for the following Poem, are ſituated on the Side of the* SOUTHAMPTON *River, about three Miles from that Town. It was a Monaſtery founded by King* HENRY THE THIRD, *in the Year* 1239, *for Ciſtercian Monks, and dedicated to St.* MARY *and St.* EDWARD. *The grand and extenſive Ruins which are ſtill exiſting, added to the Beauty of the Scenery around them, much attract the Curioſity, and Admiration of Strangers.*

THE RUINS OF NETLEY ABBEY.

HENCE all the trivial Pleaſures of the Crowd,
Folly's vain Revel, and that treach'rous Art
Which captivates the Gay, or ſooths the Proud,
And ſteals each better Purpoſe from the Heart.

More welcome far the Shades of this wild Wood
Skirting with cheerful Green the ſeabeat Sands,
Where NETLEY, near the Margin of the Flood
In lone Magnificence a Ruin ſtands.

How chang'd, alas! from that rever'd Abode
Which ſpread in ancient Days ſo wide a Fame,
When votive Monks theſe ſacred Pavements trod,
And ſwell'd each Echo with JEHOVAH's Name!

Now ſunk, deſerted, and with Weeds o'ergrown,
Yon aged Walls their better Years bewail;
Low on the Ground their loftieſt Spires are thrown,
And ev'ry Stone points out a moral Tale.

Mark how the Ivy with Luxuriance bends
Its winding Foliage through the cloiſter'd Space,
O'er the green Window's mould'ring Height aſcends,
And ſeems to claſp it with a fond Embrace.——

With muſing Step I pace the ſilent Iſle,
Each moſs-grown Nook, each tangled Path explore,
While the Breeze whiſtles through the ſhatter'd Pile,
Or wave light-daſhing murmurs on the Shore.

No other Noiſe in this calm Scene is heard,
No other Sounds theſe tranquil Vaults moleſt,
Save the Complainings of ſome mournful Bird
That ever loves in Solitude to reſt.

Haunts ſuch as theſe delight, and o'er the Soul
Awhile their grateful Melancholy caſt,
Since through all Periods ſhe can boundleſs roll,
Enjoy the Preſent, and recall the Paſt!

Here, pious Hermits from the World retir'd
In Contemplation wing'd their Thoughts to Heav'n;
Here, with Religion's heart-felt Raptures fir'd,
Wept o'er their erring Days, and were forgiv'n.

Race after Race ſucceeding, in theſe Cells,
Learn'd how to value Life, learn'd how to die;
Loſt are their Names, and no Memorial tells
In what lone Spot their mould'ring Aſhes lie!

Mute is the matin Bell which us'd to call
The wakeful Fathers from their humble Beds;
No midnight Taper glimmers on the Wall,
Or o'er the Floor its trembling Radiance ſheds!

No ſainted Shrine now pours its Blaze of Light
Bidding the zealous Bigot hither roam;
No holy Relick glads the Pilgrim's Sight,
Or lures his Foot-ſteps from a diſtant Home!——

Now fainter to the View each Object grows,
In the clear Weſt the Day's laſt Gleams are ſeen,
On Night's dim Front the Star of Ev'ning glows,
And duſky Twilight aids the ſolemn Scene.

Again quick Fancy peoples all the Gloom,
Calls from the Duſt the venerable Dead,
Who Ages ſince lay ſhrouded in the Tomb,
And bids them theſe accuſtom'd Limits tread.

Swift

Swift as her Wish the shadowy Forms appear,
O'er each chang'd Path with doubtful Step they walk,
From their keen Eyes she sees Amazement stare,
And hears, or thinks she hears, the Spectres talk.

E'en now they pass, and fading like a Dream
Back to their hallow'd Graves again they go;
But first bequeath one pitying Sigh, and seem
To mourn with me the Fate of all below!——

Disparted Roofs that threaten from above,
The tott'ring Battlement, the rifted Tow'r,
With many a scatter'd Fragment loudly prove,
All-conqu'ring Time, the Triumphs of thy Pow'r.

These speaking Stones one sacred Truth maintain,
That Dust to Dust is Man's predestin'd Lot;
He plans, and labours,——Yet how much in vain!——
Himself, his Monuments, how soon forgot!——

Forgot on Earth,——but one there ſits on high
Who bids our Virtues to his Throne aſcend,
Pleas'd he beholds them with a Parent's Eye,
To give our Hope new Wings, and crown our End!——

And you, Ye Fair, of gayer Scenes the Grace,
If Chance ſhould lead you from the jocund Train,
Curious to viſit this ſequeſter'd Place,
Amidſt its Ruins wander not in vain.

Whence do they ſtill our ſilent Wonder claim
E'en in this low, this deſolated State?
'Tis from Remembrance of their former Fame:——
They once were beautiful, they once were great!

'Tis Goodneſs beſt adorns the female Heart;
Aſks a Reſpect which muſt with Years increaſe,
Lives, when the Roſes from the Cheek depart,
And all the Joys of Adulation ceaſe!

Forgive

Forgive the Muſe, if with an anxious Love
She wooes you to attend her friendly Lay;
Warns you, leſt faithleſs to yourſelves ye prove,
And in falſe Pleaſures trifle Life away.

Know, in your Breaſts is lodg'd a Spark divine
For ever prompting to each great Deſire;——
Th' inconſtant World muſt change, that ſtill ſhall ſhine,
Nor Death's cold Hand e'er quench th' immortal Fire.

Ne'er may Diſhonour's Blaſt an Entrance find,
O keep it ſacred with a Veſtal's Care,
Feed it with all the Graces of the Mind,
Nor fail to pour the ſocial Duties there.

So o'er your Forms when TIME his Veil ſhall caſt,
And ev'ry Charm by Age ſhall be decay'd,
Your fair Renown ſhall triumph to the laſt,
And Virtue guard the Conqueſts Beauty made.

[illegible]

Forgive the Muse, if with an anxious Love
She woos you to attend her friendly Lays;
Warns you, with humble Art to [illegible]
And in fair Pleasure's pride Life's way.

Know, in your Breasts is lodg'd a Spark divine
Far ever prompting to each great Desire:——
Th' incessant World must change, that Fire shall shine,
Nor Death's cold Hand e'er quench th'immortal Fire.

Never may Dishonour's Blush [illegible] not Soul
O keep it fenced with a Vestal's Care,
Feed it with all the Graces of the Mind,
Nor fail to pour the Social Duties there.

So o'er your Forms when Time his Veil shall cast,
And ev'ry Charm by Age shall be [illegible]
Your fair Renown shall triumph to the last,
And Virtue guard the Compass Beauty made.